

Quarterly Research Report on Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship of Tobacco products



Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust

Introduction:

To discourage the multifaceted harm of tobacco, the government has enacted and amended the Smoking and Tobacco Use Control Act, 2005 to discourage its use. The formation of district, upazila and national level task force committees for the implementation of the law, and the establishment of a national tobacco control cell are part of the government's wide-spread plan for tobacco control. Honorable Prime Minister [Sheikh Hasina](#) has expressed his determination to build a 'Tobacco Free Bangladesh' by 2040. In addition, the continuous activities of NGO are accelerating the social movement.

According to the [Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2017](#), about 3.78 million (35.3%) people aged 15 and over in Bangladesh use tobacco in various ways. Bangladesh is one of the top 10 tobacco users in the world. According to Tobacco Atlas 2018, more than 1 lakh 61 thousand people die prematurely in Bangladesh every year. Tobacco is not only harmful to health, but also to the environment and the economy. Another 2017-18 study by the American Cancer Society found that the annual economic loss of Bangladesh due to tobacco-related diseases, its medical expenses and other ancillary factors is Rs 30,560 crore, which is 1.4% of GDP. Basically, in the developed world, as a result of increasing awareness about the multidimensional harm of tobacco and the strictness of the law, clever tobacco companies are turning their attention away from those countries and focusing on developing countries like Bangladesh. Although the government has taken various steps in this regard, the tobacco companies are continuing their various activities to obstruct the tobacco control activities of the government to protect public health. One of them is to make people addicted to tobacco through advertisements.

Purpose of advertising and prohibitions by law: One of the purposes of advertising is to increase people's interest in any product. According to it, the purpose and goal of advertising tobacco products is to create consumers and encourage people to consume tobacco products. Tobacco Control Act Advertising is defined as "Advertising of Tobacco Products" which means to conduct any kind of commercial activity directly or indirectly for the purpose of promoting the use of any tobacco product or tobacco. In order to prevent people from consuming unhealthy products like tobacco, the advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products has been completely banned in Bangladesh under Section 5 of the Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products (Control) Act, 2005. However, tobacco companies across the country are conducting various advertisements, campaigns and incentives for the use of tobacco products.

Especially in the point of sales (Point of Sales) are constantly displaying and promoting tobacco in a new way, which is completely illegal and punishable under the Tobacco Control Act. Pursuant to sub-section (g) of section 5 of the Tobacco Control Act, specific instructions have been given to the effect that tobacco products should not be advertised in any way at the point of sale of tobacco products. Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust Bangladesh with the support of anti-tobacco coalition organizations for more than 10 years. So far, the tobacco company has been identifying and reviewing the violation of the law and presenting it to the responsible authorities in the form of a report. Recently, the Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust has taken steps to present precise information in the relevant places through data collection and analysis in the form of quarterly research.

Purpose of the Study:

The Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products (Control) Act, 2005 prohibits the advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of all types of tobacco products in Bangladesh (Article 5). One of the objectives of the study was to identify violations of the law by tobacco companies, monitor the current state of implementation, and make recommendations for speeding up law enforcement.

Research Methodology/Indications, area & duration:

This is a 'quick survey'. Questionnaires were prepared through the forms and information on advertisements, promotions and violations of the law on tobacco products was collected through the representatives of the anti-tobacco organizations in certain areas of the country. During the period (January-March, 2020) such activities were conducted in 3 districts and 3 upazilas of the country. The places are:

1. Narayanganj Sadar
2. Mymensingh Sadar
3. Khulna Sadar
4. Satkhira Municipality
5. Barisal Sadar and
6. Pirozpur Municipality

In other parts of the country, information was also collected by talking to coalition members on the phone. The review observed almost identical activities of different tobacco companies across the country.

Research Indicators:

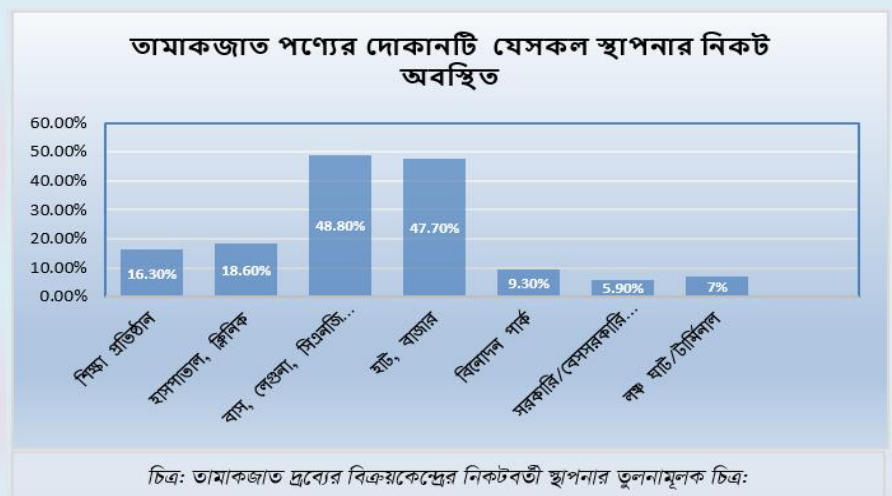
- Observing and collecting information of the company has more advertisements and which type of advertisements are more in the point of sale of tobacco products:
- Know which type of establishment or organization is closest to the point of sale:
- Know the type and process of giving gifts / incentives to the sellers and consumers of tobacco companies.
- Know about the advertising status of cigarettes and other tobacco products besides it.
- To know about the steps taken by the local administration to implement the tobacco control law in those areas:
- Whether the tobacco company is conducting any other program in those areas:
- For example, the name of the tobacco company, the campaign with the logo, etc. behind the CSR:

Results & Reviews:

➤ Tobacco Outlets (Point of Sales) and nearby establishments:

Research has shown that tobacco companies are using outlets (point of sale) as the main tool for advertising. The point of sale of tobacco companies in front of bazaars, bus-CNG stands, roads, educational institutions, hospitals, clinics across the country is more noticeable.

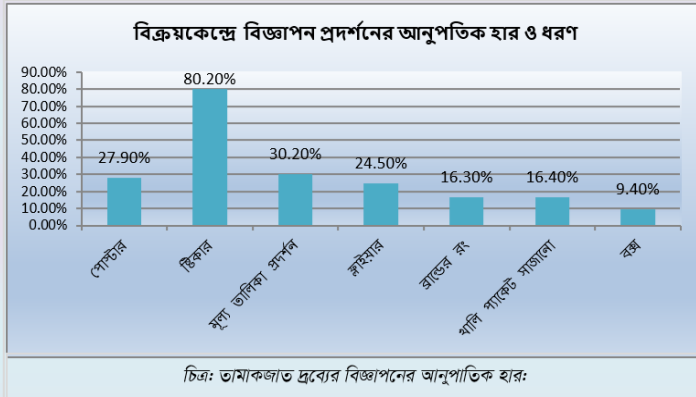
The highest 49% point of sales was found around the bus-CNG stand and the lowest 6% was near the office-court. There are also 48% tobacco shops in or near the Hat Bazaar, 19% near hospitals and clinics, 9% around entertainment centers and 16% near the educational institutions.



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➤ Proportional rates & types of advertising in point of Sales :

Tobacco companies have to change their advertising strategy at different times. For example, one of the strategies of tobacco companies is to publish the names of the brands in block letters along with the information on the sale of cigarettes at a fair price during the budget period. Basically, the main purpose of cunning tobacco companies is to promote the brand through advertising.

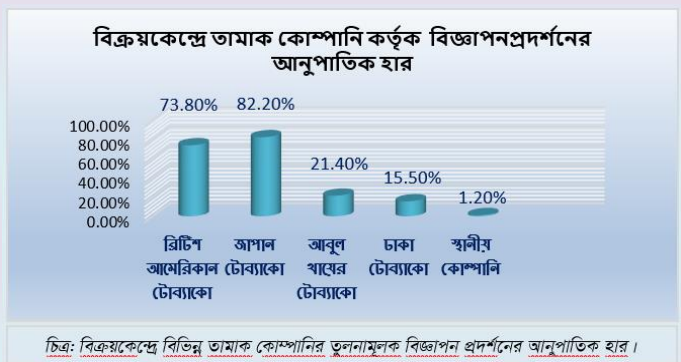


During the study, 80% of the stores noticed stickers with different messages as a means of advertising in the sales outlets. At least 9% of stores have seen ads through the box. In addition, 30% of price list displays, 28% of posters, 24% of flyers, 16% of empty packet sorting, 16% of brand colors have been seen to advertise.

➤ Proportional advertising of different tobacco companies in the advertising center :

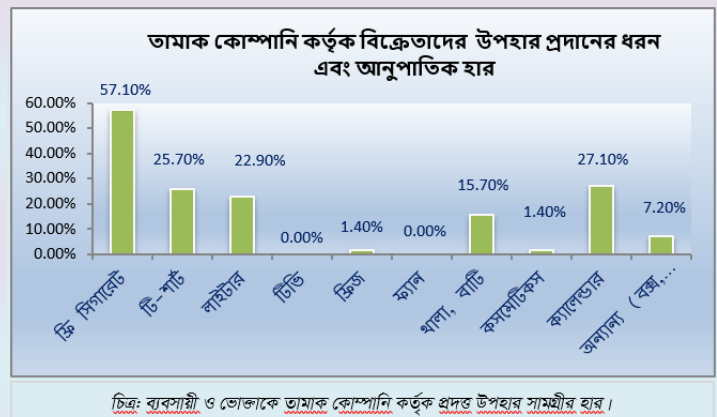
From the research areas, informations have been obtained about the advertising campaigns including British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco, Abul khayer Tobacco, Dhaka Tobacco and the promotion of tobacco products.

During the study period, the highest advertisement of Japan Tobacco Company was 72%, British American Tobacco Company 74%, Abul Khair 21%, Dhaka Tobacco 15% and other local companies 1.2%.



➤ The type and proportion of gifts given by Tobacco companies to increase sales :

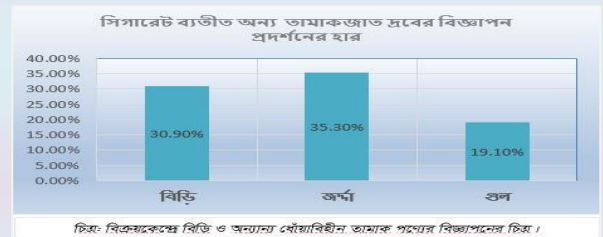
According to the survey, the highest number of free cigarettes given by tobacco companies to tobacco sellers is 57%, T-shirts with tobacco company name-logo and brand colors are 26%, New Year calendars are 27% and lighters are 26%. Also offers cash discounts, button phones, dishes, cosmetics, lights, fans, glasses, jugs, cups, rice cookers and a variety of gifts. Basically, the tobacco company gives such a gift if it can meet the sales target and submit an empty packet of certain cigarettes.



According to information gathered at the field level, tobacco companies are providing various incentives and gift items to encourage the sellers to sell tobacco products. However, it has been noticed that tobacco companies have increased the rate of giving gift items and incentives to sellers rather than buyers as a strategy to expand their business. It is noteworthy that tobacco companies and local dealers are partnering with such traders in all the outlets located in important and crowded places. It is also providing special opportunities to the sellers of tobacco products to meet the sales targets to increase the sales of tobacco products. Tobacco companies provide a wide range of tobacco products to the smokers including free cigarettes, attractive lighters, wallets, backpacks, company name-logos, and T-shirts with a specific brand of color. Since the general public does not have a clear idea about the law, they are wearing T-shirts with tobacco advertisements, using gift items which are acting as a kind of advertisement or propaganda.

➤ Advertising of Tobacco products other than cigarettes in outlets :

In addition to cigarettes, other tobacco products such as bidi, jorda and gul have been promoted in tobacco shops. In this case maximum 31% Bidi, 35% Jorda and 19% Gul advertisements have been noticed. Most of these advertisements and campaigns are being run by various local tobacco companies.



➤ Steps taken to control Tobacco in research area:

The National Tobacco Control Cell's training of local authorities in law enforcement and regular advocacy from non-governmental organizations have given impetus to the implementation of tobacco control laws in the surveyed areas. Meetings of the Tobacco Control Task Force Committee were held regularly in 3 districts/upazilas during the survey period. However, many important members of the committee were absent from the meeting. Lack of coordination has also been noticed in the implementation of the decisions taken at the meeting, which in many cases has not given importance to tobacco control among other tasks.

পরিবেশনা এলাকা	ট্যাক্সফোর্স সভা	মোবাইল কোর্ট	অন্যান্য কর্মসূচি	মন্তব্য
নারায়ণগঞ্জ সদর	✓	৫টি	আইন সম্পর্কে অবহিত	বেসরকারী সংগঠনগুলো সক্রিয় রয়েছে
ময়মনসিংহ সদর	✗	৫টি	অসোচ্চনা সভা, লিফলেট ক্যাম্পেইন	করণো পরিষ্কৃত্তির কারণে সভা পিছিয়েছে
খুলনা সদর	✓	১০টি	দোকানীকে আইন সম্পর্কে অবহিত	বেসরকারী সংগঠনগুলো সক্রিয় রয়েছে
সাতক্ষীরা পৌরসভা	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি	লিফলেট ক্যাম্পেইন	বেসরকারী সংগঠনগুলো সক্রিয় রয়েছে
বরিশাল সদর	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি		
পিরোজপুর পৌরসভা	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি	তথ্য পাওয়া যায়নি		

সিগারেট ব্যতীত অন্য তামাকজাত দ্রব্যের বিজ্ঞাপন প্রদর্শনের হার

During the January-March period, 5 mobile courts have been set up in Narayanganj Sadar, 5 in Mymensingh Sadar and 10 in Khulna Sadar. In most cases, smokers are fined in public places, and the rate of fines or penalties for tobacco companies and company representatives who advertise tobacco is relatively low. There is a tendency among the shopkeepers to disobey the law as the company pays the small amount of money that is fined to the trader / shopkeeper.



➤ Obstacles:

The study identified the following barriers:

- Intimidation and safety risks to tobacco control personnel
- Authorities and the general public have less information/knowledge about tobacco control laws

- Lack of interest and supervision of District/Upazila Tobacco Control Task Force Committees and officials in charge of law enforcement
- Irregular organization of quarterly meetings of the Task Force Committee, co-ordination with other meetings and lack of funds for organizing meetings
- The reluctance, non-cooperation and misinformation of the traders in providing information to the survey data collectors
- Lack of supervision and accountability of tobacco control activities at district / upazila level by National Tobacco Control Cell

➤ Recommendation :

In recent times, 49% of the total population of Bangladesh is young. Tobacco companies are carrying out illegal activities in various ways targeting the younger generation to create long-term consumers. Since advertising attracts tobacco users, it is essential to take appropriate steps to stop all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship to protect the health of the next generation. Advertising of any product is effective in increasing the demand of consumers towards that product and expanding the market of its product. Tobacco companies are taking full toll of this opportunity. Strict action has to be taken against the companies conducting such activities through the implementation of the regulation law.

- Regularize the meetings of the Tobacco Control District/Upazila Task Force Committee and implement the decisions of the meeting properly
- Ensure proper enforcement of tobacco control laws
- Conducting regular mobile courts and imposing fines as well as rigorous imprisonment on violators
- Ensure central guidance, assistance and accountability from the National Tobacco Control Cell for the activities of the officers in charge of law enforcement and the Task Force Committee
- To increase the proficiency of the authorized officers about law and to prepare reporting format for specific work and to follow up regularly
- To take steps to provide financial support to local anti-tobacco organizations in regular monitoring and collection of information on tobacco control violations
- Make licensing mandatory for the sale of tobacco products
- Raise social awareness against tobacco use by involving public representatives, administration and politicians
- Increase publicity at the national and local levels about important provisions of the TC Act.
- Such researches need to be conducted on a larger scale in government initiatives.

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📌 Acknowledgements:

- Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance, www.bata.net.bd
- AID Foundation, www.aid-bd.org
- Grambangla Unnyan Committee, www.grambanglabd.org
- NATAB, www.natabbd.org

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৫. দৈনিক প্রথম আলো, ২৫ এপ্রিল, ২০১৬